

December 1, 2005 marks the 50th anniversary of Mrs. Rosa Parks' graceful yet powerful act of courage -- remaining seated on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama -- that sparked the modern Civil Rights Movement. The Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute, along with Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., and Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, are calling on President George W. Bush to observe the historic day by signing into law legislation placing a life-sized statue of Mrs. Rosa Parks in the U.S. Capitol's National Statuary Hall.

"What better way to celebrate the occasion?" Jackson asked. "On December first, President Bush will have the opportunity to turn the world's attention to the power of individuals like Mrs. Rosa Parks, and to the progress the nation has made on what W.E.B. DuBois called 'the problem of the color line.' Let's take this opportunity to celebrate what *has* been done, and rededicate ourselves to what *must still* be done."

In its letter to the White House, the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute stated: "A formal White House bill signing ceremony will further honor Mrs. Parks, and would demonstrate our government's continuing commitment to the goals for which she fought." The institute's letter also states, "Mrs. Parks was a trailblazer and freedom fighter whose actions inspired the nation to live up to the ideals that all men are created equal, and that each citizen should be treated equally under the law."

On Friday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 4145, a bill calling for the statue sponsored by Congressman Jackson and Congressman Mike Rogers of Alabama. Senator Kerry sponsored matching legislation, then joined Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky in spearheading the Senate's Friday passage of the measure. The legislation, which passed the House and Senate with significant bipartisan support, will place a life-sized statue of Mrs. Rosa Parks in the U.S. Capitol's National Statuary Hall.